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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Toscanelli drew a chart, but it needed a Columbus to make the voyage. Just so, Miss Lowell, with happy and characteristic daring, has essayed her voyage, and has found a new poetic continent in place of M. Fort's France, to which she at first thought she was steering. It is the old story of Whistler and the Japanese print over again. While a few connoisseurs scarcely dared to admire Japanese prints in secret, Whistler boldly made them the basis of a new art. Some day people will probably be saying that Miss Lowell was quite as important a figure for American art as Whistler. That is always America's little way of doing things. While Europe is jawing, and the American public remains supremely indifferent, some cheeky Yankee goes out and gets a thing done without anyone taking notice.

John Gould Fletcher

REVIEWS

Arrows in the Gale, by Arturo Giovannitti: *Introduction* by Helen Keller. Hillacre Bookhouse, Riverside, Conn.

We Anglo-Saxon Americans are only vaguely aware that the nation so firmly founded on Plymouth Rock is slipping off that ancestral vantage-ground as surely in race as in creed. And still more vaguely do we appreciate the insidious advance of various European—even oriental—cultures, or kulturs, upon the stronghold of our inherited English traditions. How long will it be before some Garibaldi, or Kosciusko, or Epaminondas, ascends the chair of Washington and Lincoln

Reviews

to remind us that the melting-pot has made us over into the most cosmopolitan nation in the world?

It may be that the future of the arts in America is in the hands of these immigrants and their variously intermarrying children; that they will endow us with that quick expressiveness, that enthusiasm for beauty, that warmth of passion, which have been chilled out of Angle-Saxon blood by ten centuries or more of British fog. Already we are reminded often of the impending change: by the fiery eloquence of some proletarian orator tearing the constitution to tatters, by the demoniac rhythms of certain figures modelled by a fierce young Slavic sculptor, by a burning poem sent to POETRY from a Syrian student of Columbia, or by this white-hot book of visions from the young Italian I. W. W. "agitator."

They are indeed agitating to the comfortable conservative, these visions. Such an one, seeking the solace of poetry beside his warm fire after a good dinner, will perhaps read no further than these lines of the *Proem*:

All that you worship, fear and trust
I kick into the sewer's maw,
And fling my shaft and my disgust
Against your gospel and your law.

He would better read on, however, and then desert peaceful hearth and loaded table and go forth into the bitter world with this poet, this lover and hater of men. He would go to court and prison with him, he would sit with him all night on a Mulberry Park bench, he would look with him through a window at milady feeding her dog while a little newsboy starves in the storm, he would hear him preaching a

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Sermon on the Common and singing *The Last Oracle*; and always he would find himself in contact with a fiery spirit, whose poetry, as Miss Helen Keller says in her *Introduction*, "is the spiritualization of a lofty dream that he seeks to realize—the establishment of love and brotherhood and social justice for every man and woman upon earth."

In the presentation of his vision Mr. Giovannitti is fettered by the ordinary verse forms, while in the broader cadences of metrical prose he has plenty of room for his vivid imagery, and sets it forth, sometimes, with a magnificent gesture. One would scarcely know where to look for a nobler modern structure of wrath and despair than he builds up in *The Walker*:

Yet fearsome and terrible are all the footsteps of men upon the earth, for they either descend or climb.
They descend and they climb, the fearful footsteps of men, and some limp, some drag, some speed, some trot, some run—they are quiet, slow, noisy, brisk, quick feverish, mad; and most awful is their cadence to the ears of the one who stands still. But of all the footsteps of men that either descend or climb, no footsteps are so fearsome and terrible as those that go straight on the dead level of a prison floor, from a yellow stone wall to a red iron gate.

In *The Cage* the play of imagery is phosphorescent in its richness of color and quickness of movement. *The Sermon on the Common* is less poetic, more preachy, *The Last Nickel* is more conscious and labored, and *Out of the Mouth of Babies* is more melodramatic, though all burn with the same passion. But in *The Walker* and *The Cage* the passion is fused to white-hot purity and beaten into beautiful forms of power.

H. M.